**NAPLAN and its implications - Discussion Paper**

<http://www.nap.edu.au/information/faqs/naplan--general.html#_1>

**What I think NAPLAN assesses in terms of English**

The tests assess a student’s ability to read thoughtfully, write well and consciously be aware of how language works. It’s a test of a student’s literacy skills and to some extent, explicit grammatical knowledge.

**The Importance of NAPLAN to me**

NAPLAN matters to me only in so far as it shows me how far students are along the path to becoming proud and powerful practitioners of our language. How does it matter to you?

**What I feel about my practice in terms of improving students’ skills**

**Reading** – I have been profoundly influenced by the Reading Program. The PL could have been better, but the principles are excellent – and these are that we need to explicitly teach and model the processes we use when we read. The strategies of questioning and connecting to texts and inferring implied meaning are utterly crucial and essential to success in life at VCE and yes … in NAPLAN. I believe that I should continue to expand my use of these strategies. In my leadership role I would like to encourage staff to continue to teach and model these strategies. How can I help you understand and use independent reading strategies with your classes? Do we need to cut down some units, eliminate some?

I would also like to use SPA and PAT R to see if I can more precisely identify which students need what kind of help with reading. Do you see yourself using data at all?

NAPLAN Reading 2014

<http://www.nap.edu.au/naplan/the-tests.html>

Link above has all sample tests and answers

**Writing**- I want my students to write well, which means being able to independently choose the right vocabulary, the right sentence structures and the right forms for a particular purpose and audience.

After over twenty years of teaching, here are some of the ideas I have garnered about improving writing:

1 – Students need to do it often. I often have students write for one or two minutes after I ask questions in class, then I ask individual students for a response. This writing is never marked or assessed.

2 – Students need to see excellent writing being modelled. I often write in class using the data projector.

3 – Students need to have writing explained. I often explain the writing I am doing on the screen. I create codes – so green is adverbs, blue is connecting words etc. ~~I use the cross out button~~ I will use the cross through button when I make mistakes and ask the students why I crossed out what I did.

4 – I think that students benefit from seeing work broken down and talking about how sentences can be moved about and changed to make writing more effective. In doing so I am trying to develop my vocabulary. I need a better language for explaining writing to students and this is why I bought Working Grammar for myself and for the faculty. I think the information on pages 17, 19, 25 and 26 could be useful when I talk about writing with students. I have experimented with incorporating some of this language in one Year 8 unit – Things a Map Won’t Show You.

What ideas do you have?

**NAPLAN Writing 20142**

<http://www.nap.edu.au/information/faqs/naplan--writing-test.html>

The 2014 Writing test will require students to respond to either a persuasive or narrative Writing prompt. However, the genre of the prompt will not be disclosed prior to the test period.

On this page are four sample prompts – you might want to use for practice

The thinking and criteria for the writing guide are on this page

<http://www.nap.edu.au/naplan/about-each-domain/writing/writing.html>

The PDF is very wordy, but page 83 on is very useful in developing our knowledge of language. I am going to try and incorporate this language into my teaching. What of this might be useful to you? What could you use now? How?

**NAPLAN 2014 Language Conventions**

<http://www.nap.edu.au/naplan/the-tests.html>

There’s a lot of spelling in this – I think set spelling lists that graduate from 7 -8 – 9 could be good. Your thoughts?

The sample test demands very little explicit knowledge of grammatical terminology, but does require some.

I have always thought that the only way to make the teaching of explicit grammatical knowledge is by integrating it into all our teaching – particularly into the teaching of Writing – see above. That is why I bought Working Grammar.

**Where to Go?**

I do not believe that I should change my practice to please politicians or others. I change my practice because as a professional I recognize I can do more to help my students. This is what I want to do myself as a teacher:

1 – As a teacher I want to widen my vocabulary so that I can more precisely explain what is happening to writing when it is wrong. I want to build on the modelling I have developed more and more.

2 – I want to try one new thing each term – perhaps starting to talk explicitly about clauses and phrases and how the ordering of main clauses changes the effect of writing. What do you want to do as a teacher?

2 – In my leadership role I want to assist the faculty too. How can I help you? Arrange for a PL for all the staff? Set reading homework from Working Grammar and then discuss at each faculty meeting? Have short Thursday arvo or lunchtime meetings for those interested just practicing discussing one element of language we can teach to kids? Get a visiting speaker in to train us all?